

Remarks

By this Amendment, claims 1-16, 18-27, and 29-31 are pending in this application. Claims 17 and 28 are cancelled. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with gratitude the Examiner's indication that claims 24-26 are allowed and that claims 3-5, 7, 10-22, 28 and 31 are allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, claim 1 is amended to include the feature of allowable dependent claim 17. Thus, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 6, 8, 9 and 23 are allowable. Claims 3, 5, 7, 10, and 18 are rewritten in independent form to include the features of claim 1 and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

Claim 27 is amended to include the feature of allowable dependent claim 28. Thus, independent claim 27 and its dependent claims 29 and 30 are allowable. Claim 31 is rewritten in independent form to include the features of claim 27.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references submitted in the Information Disclosure Statements filed on September 26, 2003, and April 27, 2004, as evidenced by the signed and initialed forms PTO-1449.

Drawings

Figures 8, 9, 11, 12, and 14 are objected to by the Examiner because they allegedly include large portions of solid black. Applicant has also amended Figure 5 because it also included portions of solid black. Applicants submit that the changes to the drawing figures described above do not constitute the addition of new matter, as support for the instant amendments is provided throughout the as-filed Specification. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner approve the changes to the drawing figures.

Amendments To The Drawings

- The four (4) attached sheets of drawings in **APPENDIX A** replace the original sheets depicting FIGS. 3-5, 8, 9, and 11-15.

- The changes made to FIGS. 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 14 are described in the **Remarks/Arguments** section beginning on page **13** of this paper.

APPENDIX A: REPLACEMENT SHEETS FOR FIGS. 3-5, 8, 9, AND 11-15.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 23, 27, 29, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kwan et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0006762)¹ in view of either Ishigame (U.S. Patent No. 6,499,936) or Punnekanti et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0202865). This rejection is rendered moot by the above-described claim amendments.

By amending the claims to gain allowance of this application, Applicants are not agreeing with the merits of this rejection. Applicants reserve the right to file original claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 23, 27, 29, and 30 in a continuation application and to traverse rejections based on these references in any later filed continuation application. For example, Applicants do not agree that either Ishigame or Punnekanti et al. are combinable with Kwan et al. The arms of the handler robots as described by Ishigame and Punnekanti are not suited support a balance mass. Additionally, the handler robot arms do not meet the requirements for supporting such a load while maintaining the required flexibility to displace the balance mass. For example, the pivot point of the handler arms only allow rotation about one axis, whereas the supported (or suspended) balance mass is displaceable in any direction in the XY-plane. Furthermore, the handler robots of Ishigame or Punnekanti do not teach or suggest how to obtain the stiffness characteristics of the balance mass or how to deal with the vertical displacement of the balance mass caused by a horizontal displacement. For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that the originally filed claims are allowable over the references relied on for this rejection.

Having addressed the foregoing rejection, it is respectfully submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

¹ Applicants respectfully submit that U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0006762 has issued as U.S. Patent 6,525,803.

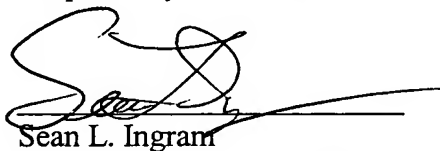
Customer Number
00909

Application Serial No.: 10/670,791
Attorney Docket No.: 081468-0306107
Reply and Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. §1.111

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Dated: April 29, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean L. Ingram', is written over a horizontal line.

Sean L. Ingram
Registration No.: 48,283
PILLSBURY WINTHROP LLP
1600 Tysons Blvd.
McLean, Virginia 22102
703-905-2000